

Letters to the Editor . . .

Editor's Note: This review by an outstanding Californian of the biography of a remarkable California woman is of such general interest that it is published here in full.

PSYCHOLOGIST UNRETIRED; THE LIFE PATTERN OF LILLIEN J. MARTIN. By Miriam Allen deFord, Stanford University Press, 1948, \$3.00.

Lillian J. Martin (1851-1943) was not only a psychologist of international reputation but was one of the most remarkable women that America has produced. Other women in this country (though not many) have been more eminent in science, other women have been more widely acclaimed for their social services, their philanthropies, their feminism, or their political activities, and there may be others who have remained as alert and energetic into the 90's; but I know of no one who was so outstanding in all of these respects and others.

Consider the many things in which she was first or near-first. She was the first woman teacher of physical sciences in the high schools of Indianapolis; the first woman to head a science department in a San Francisco high school; the only woman in this country who ever changed her vocation to psychology after the middle forties; the first woman permitted to study psychology at the University of Göttingen; the only woman psychologist to be awarded an honorary Ph.D. in psychology by a German university; the first woman to be elected vice-president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; one of the first four or five women psychologists to become a starred scientist; the first woman anywhere to open an old-age counseling center; the only professor I have ever known, man or woman, who took up an entirely new field of work after reaching the age of retirement, who pursued it for more than a quarter-century, and who accomplished more important work and achieved more eminence after 65 than in all the preceding years. And what other woman ever learned to drive a car after the age of 78, or to type by the touch system after the age of 80? What other woman ever traveled alone so extensively in Soviet Russia after 80, or in practically all the countries of South America after the age of 88?

All this and much more is recounted by Miss deFord in this extremely interesting biography. There are many things in the story that were new to me, despite the fact that I was a member of the Stanford faculty for six years before Dr. Martin "retired" to her new career. I too was teaching psychology at Stanford, but at that time in another department of the university, and I was working with mental tests, which Dr. Martin then regarded

as hardly a legitimate field of psychological research. Little did I dream that she would later completely reverse herself on this issue, that she would devote a good part of her last year at Stanford to mastering Binet testing procedures, and that she would use these and other psychometric devices for 27 years after her "retirement"!

Lillian Martin was a precocious child, active, energetic, and determined. She began teaching, in order to earn her college expenses, shortly after graduating from an academy at 16. At 25 she took the examination for admission to Vassar and passed with such high honors that she was awarded a four-year scholarship. From the time of her graduation at 29 until she had reached the age of 43 she was a high school teacher of science. Then some reading in psychology, plus encouragement from one of her friends, led her to burn all her bridges and to prepare for a career in psychology. She resigned her position and left for Europe, where she studied for four years at Göttingen with the distinguished psychologist G. E. Müller. Later she returned to Germany several times and studied at the University of Würzburg in 1907, at Bonn in 1908, and at Munich in 1914. It was Bonn that awarded her an honorary Ph.D. degree in 1913.

Her career as a teacher of psychology began in 1898, when she was appointed assistant professor at Stanford immediately after her return from Germany. She was then 47 years old. By the time she became professor emeritus in 1916 she had published some 20 technical articles, a majority of them in German periodicals and in the German language. The story of her work as a student in Germany and as a member of the Stanford faculty is well told in two chapters written for the biography by Dr. J. Harold Williams, who had been one of her graduate students from 1912 to 1914.

When Dr. Martin left Stanford at the age of 65 she began planning for herself an entirely new career as a private practitioner in clinical psychology, among the first in the United States to enter that now popular vocation. Within a year she had opened a clinic in her San Francisco apartment and was soon kept busy with the problems of mal-adjusted children. Later she opened mental hygiene clinics at two San Francisco hospitals, giving her forenoons to directing them and reserving her afternoons and evenings for private practice. In 1920, at the age of 69, she inaugurated a special clinic for the psychological examination of normal pre-school children, one of the first in the country.

For several years Dr. Martin's work was almost entirely with children, but the problems of children led naturally to the problems of parents and grand-

parents, and as the years passed a larger and larger proportion of her clients were old people. It was in 1929, when she was 78, that she opened her old age counselling center, the first of its kind in America, if not in the world. This she directed for the rest of her life in close association with Mrs. Clare Moore deGruchy. During its first ten years the center had more than a thousand clients, and by 1943, the year of Dr. Martin's death, the number had risen to nearly three thousand. From the age of 78 until her death at almost 92, Dr. Martin devoted the greater part of her time to pioneering in the psychological problems of gerontology. New and ingenious methods were developed which proved highly successful in the rehabilitation of hundreds of old people by giving them new interests, new attitudes, new skills, and new hope. Her methods may have been based on "inspired common sense," as the biographer puts it, but they worked so effectively that they have been widely copied by others.

In a brief review it is impossible to give the

reader an adequate idea of Dr. Martin's energy and devotion to causes. I have said nothing about her feminist and political activities, about the cooperative farm she conducted between the ages of 82 and 86 for the rehabilitation of old men, about her work with shell-shocked veterans of World War I, about her training 129 high school girls during the depression, to prepare them for positions in child care, about her long-continued work among the Chinese in San Francisco, or about her three valuable books on old age and old age counselling.

It has fallen to the lot of few people to be remembered so gratefully by so many, and for such good reasons. Her entire life was one of continuous maturation and of unceasing learning. That she never grew old must surely be explained in part by the fact that her life was so filled with devoted service to others.

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C. P. S. Fee Schedules

San Francisco

Editor, CALIFORNIA MEDICINE

Dear Sir:

The returns from the statewide survey, conducted by the California Physicians' Service fee schedule committee for the purpose of determining changes in the schedule requested by physician-members, have been tabulated.

We want the county medical societies, specialty groups and individuals who responded to our survey in such a gratifying manner, to know of the

committee's appreciation, and to have the assurance that the thought and effort that we put into our recommendations to the C.P.S. board of trustees will match their own, with elimination of inequities and modernization of the schedule as the chief objectives.

Very truly yours,

W. L. BENDER, *Chairman*

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